

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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SUBJECT: ICFTU PROMOTING "WEEK OF ACTION" AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

REF: EC BRUSSELS 9326

1. IN REACTION TO THE "SENSELESS AND BRUTAL MASURES WHICH THE APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS NOW TAKING TO STRANGLE THE AFRICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT," THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) HAS ENDORSED A LABOR CAMPAIGN OF "FHE STRONGEST POSSIBLE MEASURES, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL ACTION" AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE NOV 24-26 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KARSTON ON NOV 26 ANNOUNCED "A WEEK OF ACTION" STARING JAN 17, 1977. SPECIFIC ACTION TAKEN WILL DEPEND ON THE DECISION OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,KERWTEN SAID.

3. A PRESS RELEASE SUMMARIZING THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS STATES: "ACTION ENVISAGED INCLUDES LARGE-SCALE RALLIES; PRESS, RADIO AND TV INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONALITIES
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FROM SOUTH AFRICA; DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTATION; AND

INDUSTRIAL ACTION. THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION WILL INCLUDE THE GROUNDING OF SOUTH AFRICA AIRCRAFT AND THE BLOCKING OF SHIPS, AS WELL AS BOYCOTTS ON THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF GOODS DESTINED FOR OR COMING FROM SOUTH AFRICA. A TOTAL CONSUMER BOYCOTT DURING THE WEEK OF ACTION IS ALSO RECOMMENDED."

4. WHEN A REPRTER EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM ABOUT HOW MANY UNIONS WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE "WEEK OF ACTION," KERSTEN SAID THAT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD FELT STRONGLY THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO PASS FROM MERE WORDS TO ACTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, KERSTEN ADDED, SYMPATHY STRIKES OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY ALWAYS SEEM TO FALL ON THE BACKS OF ONE OR TWO UNIONS--TRANSPORT WORKERS AND PTT WORKERS--AND SO IT WAS AGREED THAT THE NATIIONAL TRADE UNION CENTERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SECRETARIATS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE ULTIMATE DECISION ON WHAT TO DO.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S QUESTION ON ANOTHER SUBJECT--THE ICFTU'S RELATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO--KERSTEN GAVE AN UPBEAT INERPRETATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP, CITING COOPERATION EXISTING AT THE ILO AS AN EXAMPLE, AND MENTIONING PARENTHETICALLY THAT THE ICFTU HAD SENT AFL-CIO GEORGE MEANY A TELEGRAM NOV 25 ADVISING HIM OF THE BOARD'S DECISION ON SOUTH AFRICA AND ASKING FOR AFL-CIO SUPPORT.

6. OTHER ICFTU BOARD DECISIONS WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.HINTON

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